1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

in this way, all is well; but if they get angry, they will trouble the people who have neglected them.

THE HOME SHRINE. Shrines found at the homes are much simpler than the village shrines and are found either inside or just outside the house, or in both places. Those outside the house are placed in the front wall facing the courtyard, and the wall of the house is a part of the shrine. Sometimes a little hole is made in the wall to shelter the *devi* when it rains. These shrines may be dedicated to any of the *devis* mentioned in the preceding pages—Asmanimai, Kalimai, Khermai, Marimai and Shardamai being the most commonly worshipped outside the house. One finds flags above, and also below; the iron trident; black and other kinds of bangles; a *salagrama* stone; *sendur* marks and the like. Iron lashes and strings of beads are not uncommon.

The place reserved within the dwelling for the household goddess, or god is even simpler. There is a niche in the wall from four to six inches above the floor. Within the niche is found a *salagrama* stone or some iron symbol reddened with *sendur*. Vermilion is also daubed on the wall round the niche. The floor space immediately below the deity is plastered with cowdung. A small trident usually leans against the wall at one side of the shrine; there is a *dip* which is lighted at dusk, when the women of the house prostrate themselves before the shrine. As was noted, both kinds of shrines are usually found. If the house is just a hut of branches, and there is no earthen wall, symbols of the deities will be found on the floor in one of the corners. The house shrine is generally called *dewahar* or *dewala*.

DEVI POSSESSION. (*Bawa*). The phenomenon of spirit possession is fairly common among certain of the lower classes. The Kols also practise this. The trance occurs before the village shrine and is usually induced only at the time of the *Jawara* festivals, which come at the spring and autumnal equinox. It may be resorted to on other occasions if there seems to be a case of extreme necessity. The actual trance is induced partly by the singing and the beating of drums, at which Kols are so adept. The person seeking the *bawa* takes his place before the *devi* and after a period of concentration and emotion begins to tremble, then shout, beat himself upon the ground, and becomes in appearance a totally different person. During this time he will answer questions put to him by persons seeking guidance, who believe that it is not he that is answering them, but the spirit at that time resident in him. During this period, the one under the possession of the *devi* is practically insen-

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787 sible to pain, and very painful things may be resorted to without any
[151] apparent sensation on his part. Some drug may be partly responsible.

There are cerain tests as to whether a person is truly possessed of the *devi* or not. The following are tests Kols have given.

1. A trembling and jerking of the head and limbs.
2. A state of semi-consciousness. He is clearly not himself, but is able to recognise the people who stand about him and ask him questions.
3. The uttering of the magic words: "oohha, oohha." No meanings could be given for this, but it represents a gasping effort.[1]
4. The uttering of other unintelligible words and phrases.

787 5. The ability to walk and jump about on spiked sandals without
785 evidence of pain or discomfort.

6. The lashing of the back with the iron lash until it is raw and bleeding.

7. The passing of the point of the trident through the tongue, cheek, or the skin of the neck and leaving it there from a half hour to two hours. During this time the person may move about, and if it is not
[757] through his tongue, may answer questions. This is said to be the supreme test. It is claimed that no sores or bleeding follow it and that it is treated by a mixture of ashes, *ghi*, *pan* and lime juice.

787 It is not held that all of these must concur to give adequate proof; and though often they do not go as far as really wounding themselves, the *bawa* is still regarded as a genuine one.

If two men, for instance, should be possessed at the same time by different *devis*, there may be a contest between those particular *devis* should there be any enmity between them. One may try to defeat the other, and the result is a fight between the men.

Kol women are also said to have the *bawa*, but with them this phenomenon is not nearly so common. It is taken as a sign that the deity is pleased with them.

During the time of the *bawa*, people come seeking guidance and help for their troubles: childless women ask what offerings they should give in order that they may bear children; domestic troubles are told and their solution asked for; illness, lack of work and the like, are all brought before the *devi*, and an answer is forthcoming.

787 Following is a description of a *bawa* seen by the author. It was
171 a Domar *bawa*, not a Kol one, but Indians familiar with Kol *bawas*
564 said that it was not essentially different. The *bawa* was performed under abnormal circumstances: it was not done before a regular shrine, but one improvised against a telephone pole.

The assistant first cleared a spot of grass making a bare area about two feet wide and three feet long. The one who was to perform then came and poured a little water over the spot, rubbed the earth

1 It may be connected with the name *OJHA* or "medicine man".

A [i.e., a low caste Hindu.—Analyst]